

ABM

Defense a Priority, Russians Are Told

Reuters

MOSCOW, Oct. 3—Premier Kosygin warned the Russian people in a speech published today that increasing Soviet defense potential is still a top priority.

The Communist Party newspaper Pravda quoted Kosygin as saying that the international situation was tense, especially as a result of the Vietnam war.

His speech, made yesterday in Kishinev, capital of Soviet Moldavia, was seen here as a strong hint that improvements in living standards would have to take second place to defense spending, though he said the government aimed at a steady growth of national income.

"The strengthening of the country's defense potential, the mobilization of all forces for its economic development, will guarantee our state the conditions for peaceful construction," Kosygin said.

His speech appeared to confirm reports of a substantial increase in defense spending in the 1968 budget.

Informed sources said the declared defense appropriation could go up by between 7 and 10 per cent when the Supreme Soviet, the nation's parliament, meets for a three-day session here next week. The budget has already been approved by the government and the Communist Party Central Committee.

Victor Zorza of The Manchester Guardian wrote from London:

Kosygin's speech follows recent indications of the revival of a dispute in the Soviet leadership on the allocation of resources between military and civilian needs. In this dispute, Kosygin has championed the civilian sector while Party Secretary Brezhnev has stressed the needs of defense.

The speech suggests that Kosygin has had to give in to

the defense lobby, which is bound to weaken his position in the leadership.

ABM System Blamed On Hawks' Pressure

Reuters

MOSCOW, Oct. 3—The Soviet government newspaper Izvestia today criticized the U.S. decision to deploy a limited antiballistic-missile defense against Communist China as a surrender to pressure from Pentagon "hawks" and munitions makers.

But, in a surprisingly mild article, Izvestia did not question America's right to deploy the missiles, nor did it describe them as a threat to peace.

Rather, it took the line that the ABM decision showed the kind of pressure the hawks put on U.S. government leaders to increase defense spending.

The newspaper hinted that this type of pressure could also result in "fatal consequences stemming from the efforts of those who fan the arms race for the sake of their own selfish interest."